

John Podesta Talks About His "Evil Twin" Skippy

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The *Washington Post* profiles Obama transition leader John Podesta — and his evil twin Skippy.

To fully understand how John Podesta is managing the complex Democratic takeover of the federal government, you have to be familiar with Skippy, the evil twin.

Anyone who has worked for Podesta in the past decade knows Skippy, who first appeared during Podesta's eventful years as chief of staff in the Clinton White House. As scandal rocked the end of that presidency, staffers knew they had better come prepared to meetings. Otherwise, nurturing mentor John would be replaced by Skippy — Podesta's quick-tempered, edgy and sarcastic alter ego.

"You haven't seen him in this meeting, have you?" the transition co-chairman for Barack Obama says with a laugh, noting that many a reporter has met Skippy.

"I'm half Greek and half Italian, and you would expect that I would have a hot temper," he says in an interview at the downtown transition office, where the tightly wound, wiry operative is building a government. "I like people to perform at a high level." He likens his operating style to a loud, ethnic family dinner. "Sometimes our emotions get expressed, but we all love each other and we all are trying to help each other succeed."

That sentiment is pretty much echoed by those who have worked with and for Podesta over his three decades in Washington — most of whom are now lining up for jobs. "Let's say my in-box is filled," he says with a wide grin.

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